

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) today issued the following statement regarding House passage of H.Res. 868, honoring the service and sacrifice of America's servicewomen and female veterans:

"As the highest-ranking female member on the House Armed Services Committee, I recognize the important role women play in our Armed Forces. Female servicemembers are and have historically been an important part of America's war efforts, voluntarily serving in every military conflict since the Revolutionary War.

"But even though women have served this nation as bravely and capably as their male counterparts, their sacrifice has not always received the honor or recognition it deserves. Earlier this year, the Department of Defense reported a 7.6% increase in the number of sexual assault cases involving military personnel. The vast majority of these victims are female.

"Sexual abuse and other acts of misogyny violate the core principals of our Armed Forces. Crimes against women as a method of warfare are nothing new, but it is deeply disturbing that, in this case, our troops are frequently the perpetrators. It is imperative that our military leaders work harder to create a military culture in which sexual violence is not only intolerable, but unthinkable.

"The fact that America's servicewomen continue to thrive in the face of this and other adversities is truly a testament to their strength and love of country. So in advance of Veterans Day, I would like to encourage all people to recognize the service and sacrifice of women soldiers, past and present. They deserve praise not only for their courage and perseverance, but for the path they've paved for a new generation of women in the military."

Rep. Sanchez has been a longtime advocate for women in the military. In 2005, she led a successful effort to revise the Uniform Code of Military Justice to include a meaningful sexual assault statute that empowers victims and punishes offenders. Rep. Sanchez was also able to include language in the 2004 Defense Authorization Act to establish a Department of Defense task force to investigate sexual harassment and violence in the United States Military and Naval Academies.

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